

The doctor might be mad, but his techniques are cutting edge.

# THE HOUSE ON THE EDGE OF MIDNIGHT

BY RAYMOND E. DYER

## Ramsay the damned

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Raymond works as a substitute teacher in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and studied English and History at Elizabethtown College. For more insight into the creation of this horrific RAVENLOFT® adventure, see Raymond's guest editorial on page 4.

"The House on the Edge of Midnight" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 4-6 good-aligned characters of levels 4-6 (about 24 total levels). It is best played on a rainy autumn night, with the lights turned low and candles around the table.

At least one magical weapon is required to complete the adventure successfully. At least one priest should be counted among the party's number, as should an elf or female character.

Although located in a pocket domain in the RAVENLOFT campaign setting, this adventure can be adapted for nearly any AD&D fantasy setting. Statistics for ghosts used in this adventure are drawn from *Van Richten's Guide to Ghosts* (TSR #9355), but enough information is provided to run the adventure if this accessory is unavailable.

The new monsters featured in this module originally appeared in Michael D. Winkle's "Formidable Visitants" article in *DRAGON® Magazine* #252. Two magical items—Lord Ramsay's *intellect syringe* and the tome *The Revelations of the Prince of Twilight*—appeared in an article by Ted Zuvich in the same issue. DMs running the adventure without these articles might consider replacing the items with others of a similar nature. The *intellect syringe* is a difficult item to replace, but either a *libram of ineffable damnation* or a *crystal hypnosis ball* would serve well in place of Ramsay's magical book.

In "The House on the Edge of Midnight," the PCs wash ashore on a small island and are taken in by Doctor Blake Ramsay. At first their host seems friendly and congenial, but as the night draws on, clues indicate a darker side to Lord Ramsay.

### The Tragedy

One hundred years ago, Blake Ramsay sailed from his home in Mordentshire toward the misty borders of the Sea of Sorrows. He and his family would find a

new home, he had determined, in a place where he could follow his arcane and medical pursuits without interruption from the harsh strictures and laws of the doctoral community.

The coast was long behind them when they spotted land. Having sailed far off the edge of every nautical chart in the Land of the Mists, Lord Ramsay felt certain that the location would prove ideal for his work. He promptly set about building a home, finding the silent natives of the island very helpful, and he settled down to study.

However, Lord Ramsay did not realize that he had become trapped by the dark powers. His ruthless experimental surgeries in Mordentshire, always on living patients and never with the benefit of anesthesia, attracted the attention of the dark powers, and now the good doctor promised to take his work to new extremes. He was being groomed to become the master of his own island of terror.

Lady Ramsay soon grew large with child, and a younger brother was born for their only daughter, Liza. However, young Gregory suffered deformities: He had a hunched back and oozing sores across his body. Lord Ramsay, knowing that his son would never be able to practice medicine, loathed Gregory.

Two years later, Lady Ramsay bore a second son, but Blake, Jr. was feeble-minded. Lord Ramsay hated this child all the more, since in his estimation the mind is a man's greatest asset. Lord Ramsay estranged himself from his wife after her failures to produce a proper heir, delving more heartily into his work.

Determining that fate had declared that Liza would one day be responsible for carrying on his work, Lord Ramsay focused on his daughter. He began training her in the practice of anatomy and medicine.

Disaster struck when Liza was twelve. Lord Ramsay watched from the dining room window as his only hope of a legacy fell from the rocky cliffs before his home, hurled by the winds of a terrible storm. Panicked, he followed Liza, scaling three hundred feet of cliff by means of narrow pathways and treacherous leaps, but a hideous truth awaited him at the bottom.

Liza was dead. The fall had torn away limbs, and scarlet blood stained her blonde hair. Carrying his daughter, Blake Ramsay scaled the cliffs. The doctor returned to his laboratory in the basement without a word to his horror-stricken family, bolted the door, and worked feverishly for two weeks to return his daughter to life. On the fourteenth day after the tragedy, just after sundown, Lord Ramsay returned. Overcome with madness, he murdered his entire family in their sleep. From them he took the organs, limbs, and unbroken bones that Liza would need once the operations were complete.

The doctor worked into the night, stitching his daughter back together. A storm was brewing outside. That night, Lord Ramsay was not alone in his laboratory. The dark powers granted him his wish. At one minute before midnight, Liza Ramsay was reborn, and the clock in the dining room stopped counting time.

When she awoke, Blake was seized with terror. Liza's beautiful blue eyes had turned a foul, iridescent green. Responding quickly, he bound her to the operating table while he went to his family members in search of another pair of eyes that would perfect his beloved daughter. His wife and both sons had possessed brilliant blue eyes. No matter the replacements, Liza's eyes quickly returned to the same grotesque green minutes after the surgery was complete. Slowly, inexorably, a green pallor spread outward from the pupils, until no other color remained. The ghastly green eyes stared into Blake's soul, watching him no matter where he went in the room. Worse, the doctor feared that people would never take his daughter's intellect seriously if they could not look beyond her deformity. He felt certain that someone with the right eyes would make his daughter beautiful again.

Lord Ramsay locked his daughter in the laboratory. If these operations on his family could not serve to replace Liza's eyes, then he simply would await the arrival of someone new to the isle.

Lord Ramsay dragged the remains of his family downstairs and disposed of them the best way he could imagine. He stuffed them into the iron woodstove in

the parlor and burned them, figuring they could atone for their failures by warming him for the night. Later, he sensed the three presences that now haunt his home. The spirits of his wife and sons lurk in the shadows of the house, tormenting their slayer and driving him deeper into madness.

For decades, Lord Blake Ramsay has endured the last night of his family's life, their tormented spirits a constant reminder of his failure, as he sees it, to restore his daughter to perfect life.

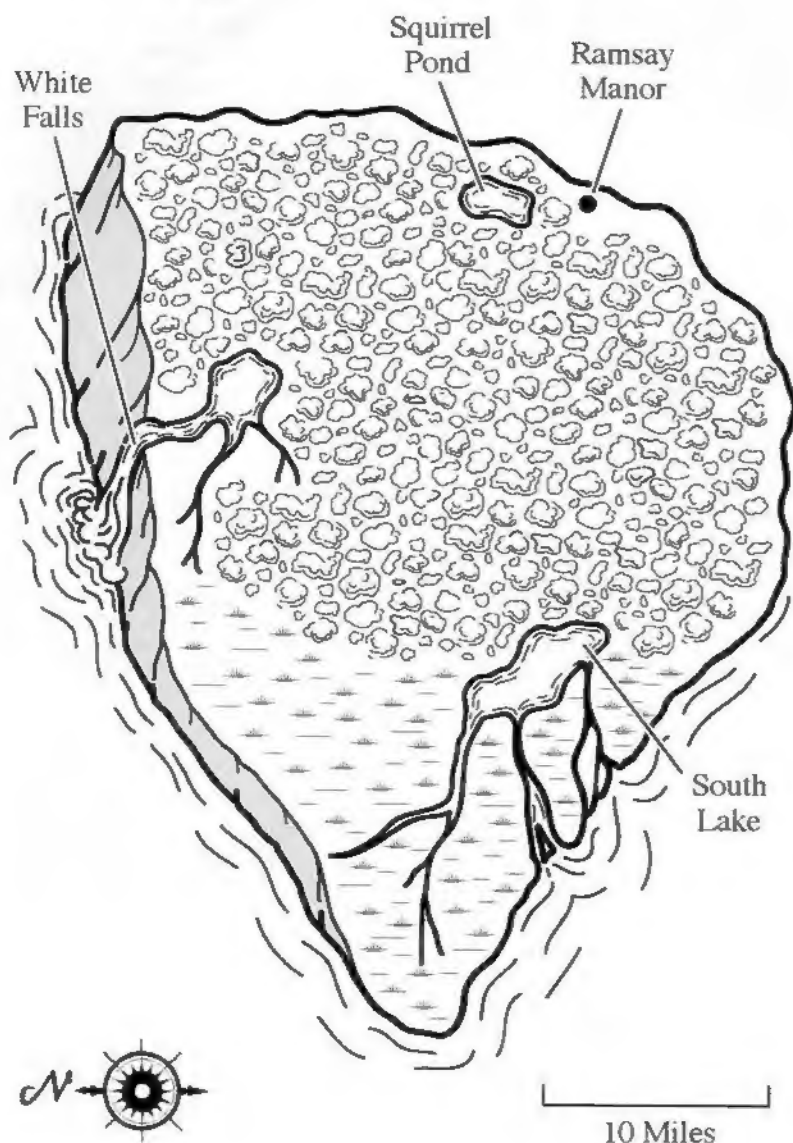
## Starting the Adventure

The adventure involves the PCs after a terrible storm at sea tears their ship apart. It is up to the DM to find an appropriate reason for the PCs to be on the boat. One method is to drop a rumor while the PCs are at repose in a port city such as Mordentshire or Martira Bay. Rumors concerning the islands of Markovia or Dominia, where mad doctors reputedly conduct inhumane experiments, could help set the mood for the adventure and provide an interesting juxtaposition when the PCs find themselves at the mercy of just the sort of man they had intended to confront!

Finding a captain and crew willing to journey away from the mainland into the Sea of Sorrows provides an opportunity for the DM to insert an important NPC into the adventure. Should an elf or charismatic female NPC already be traveling with the PCs, this encounter could be omitted from the adventure, but it is strongly suggested that the first target for Lord Ramsay's schemes not be a player character.

The only captain willing to partake in such a dangerous expedition is a young captain from Dementlieu named Claude d'Nerrare. Claude has blinded himself to the dangers of the Sea of Sorrows in the hopes of making a name for himself. His ship, the *Bluesprite*, is named for its figurehead, that of a well-endowed woman with gossamer wings, straining to hold her breath. The DM should do his best to develop Claude as a foolhardy, well-meaning character who, for all his faults, is still likeable. This will make his death in the storm more poignant.

## The Isle



Claude's first mate is a Sithican elf who goes by the name of Luther, since he has grown tired of men butchering his true elven name. Luther is the only NPC survivor of the shipwreck. Luther's beautiful elven eyes attract Lord Ramsay's attention away from those of any of the PCs, at least for the first night.

**Luther (Lethellan Nomoris), male elf**  
F3: AC 6; MV 12; hp 16; THAC0 18; #AT

1; Dmg 1d6+3 (*cutlass* +1); Str 14, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 16; ML 15; AL LN; leather armor, *cutlass* +1. Luther is specialized in the use of his *cutlass* +1. He also carries a potion of *water breathing* with small nicks in the green-stained glass vial marking off the gradation of three doses.

Luther has a low regard for most men, though he enjoys the company of

elves and human women. While not stupid, Luther is a glutton for flattery and lets down his guard easily after a few compliments. He signed on with Claude after finding that most sailors harbored a general distrust for members of his race. As first mate of the *Bluesprite*, he commanded the respect of the men who scoffed at him before, and many quickly learned that Luther could easily be won over with some well-practiced adulation.

### Preparing the Adventure

The adventure is presented in two sections. This first, "The House," details Lord Ramsay's manor. Should PCs step outside the provided scenario, the DM can easily continue with the adventure, adjusting it for the party's actions. The second part, "Events," provides a path down which the adventure is likely to progress.

The following timeline outlines the adventure's chain of events. These events need not be played in order. Indeed, some might be avoided entirely by a clever party. Ideally, though, the adventure should find PCs heading toward the moment when they find Lord Ramsay's iron key and bring about Event 8: The Nightstorm.

### Timeline of the Past

**May 1, 387:** Lord Ramsay and his family sail from Mordentshire.

**May 14, 387:** Lord Ramsay and his family arrive on the isle.

**October 17, 393:** Liza falls from the cliffs. Lord Ramsay locks himself in the laboratory.

**October 31, 393:** Lord Ramsay makes a pact with the dark powers and murders his family. Liza is reborn as a flesh golem. Helen, Gregory, and Blake, Jr. become ghosts bound to the house.

**393 to Present:** Lord Ramsay operates on natives, shipwreck survivors, pirates, and explorers in vain attempts to restore Liza's eyes.

### Order of Events

**Event 1:** After washing ashore on the island, the PCs surmount the cliffside and find the manor.

**Event 2:** PCs meet Lord Ramsay.

## Denizens of the Isle

Should the PCs desire to explore more of the isle, the following encounters are suggested. Some of them, such as the hairy spiders and large bats, may also be used inside the manor if the PCs seem to be having too easy a time.

Roll 1d6 or choose:

**1. Large bats** (3d6): AC 8; MV 3, fly 15 (C); HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d2; SA 1% chance per point of damage inflicted to contract rabies; SD -3 bonus to AC vs. missiles fired by opponents with less than 13 Dexterity; SZ M; ML 6; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 35; MM/15.

These hunters stalk prey in swarms all across the isle.

**2. Hairy spiders** (1d3): AC 8; MV 12, web 9; HD 1-1; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save at +2); SZ T (6" diameter); ML 10; INT low (5); AL NE; XP 65; MM/326.

While dangerous in hordes, these creatures can be effectively used as the PCs are breaking camp in the morning. A PC awakes to find a spider poised on his arm or leg, staring intently at him, belying a cruel cunning as if it were just waiting for the right moment to sink in its fangs ...

**3. Cannibal zombies** (3d4): AC 7; MV 6; HD 2+2; hp 11 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8 (claw) or 1d2 (bite); SA poison (failure indicates transformation into a cannibal zombie); SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold* and *poison*; SZ M; ML 12; INT non (0); AL CE; XP 270; *RAVENLOFT* MCA3/122.

These unfortunates are victims of Lord Ramsay who have undergone his tortures and escaped the manor. One by one they fell to the curse of cannibalism. Each of these zombies is missing no less than one eye, and most have had limbs amputated by the doctor during their stay in the manor.

**4. Ravenloft flesh golem** (1): AC 6; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d8/2d8; SA strangulation; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, see below; SZ M; ML 20; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 5,000; *RAVENLOFT* MCA3/47. If the golem hits with both hands in the same round, it strangles its opponent on successive rounds for 3d8 points of damage per round. It is immune to cold and lightning, and it is unaffected by spells that do not directly deal damage.

Lord Ramsay has made many mistakes while trying to comprehend the nature of his daughter's curse. One of these creatures wanders the isle, aghast

at its hideous form. This hateful creature loathes only one thing more than its own existence—Doctor Ramsay.

**5. Natives** (2d4+2): AC 10; MV 12; F1; hp 5; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (spear); SZ M; ML 10; INT average (8); AL N; XP 35. Each member of this hunting band carries a pair of javelins, which he hurls before entering melee. The men are lean and muscular. Their skin is pale white, and they wear the hides of deer felled in the forest. They speak rarely, and only in their own tongue.

The natives learned long ago that Lord Ramsay and all those associated with him mean trouble. They are very cautious of PCs, especially armed ones. They are also a superstitious lot and flee in panic from any showy display of magic.

**6. Unseen trackers:** The PCs sense that someone is following them. However, the being responsible for the sounds the PCs hear cannot be seen. Perhaps it is the flesh golem stalking them in hopes of finding an ally in its crude schemes against Lord Ramsay, or perhaps it is a native scout hoping to learn the PCs' motives. Play this encounter to keep the PCs guessing and looking deeper into every shadow.

**Event 3:** Lord Ramsay serves the PCs a late dinner while his homonculus spies on them.

**Event 4:** Lord Ramsay attempts to abduct the chosen NPC. The PCs thwart Ramsay and "slay" him. Ramsay disappears via his *shadow door* ability.

**Event 5:** While searching the manor, the PCs find the door to Liza's prison. Playing the innocent victim, she tells them of the iron key.

**Event 6:** The PCs unearth Lord Ramsay's journal and search the master bedroom.

**Event 7:** Infuriated by the intrusion upon his personal rooms, the doctor attacks.

**Event 8:** PCs find the iron key and release Liza. The Nightstorm begins.

**Event 9:** The griffon topiary in the hedge maze transforms and flies the PCs to the mainland.

## The House

Except where noted otherwise, Lord Ramsay's manor is constructed of aged wood. Windows bear a thick layer of dust and must be wiped before they can be seen through. Ceilings are generally eight feet high, and the furniture shows signs of disrepair.

### Ground Floor

#### 1. Parlor.

The door creaks open into a dusty parlor. A large chair is discernable beneath inches of dust. An end table rests beside a large couch. A scrawny brown rat scurries along the far wall.

In the corner to your right stands a large, black iron woodstove. Its double doors are closed. Behind the stove is a wall-hanging that is creased in the

middle. There is a painting on the top half, but some sort of writing seems to cover the lower portion.

Steps climb to a second floor balcony, and a dining room stretches out of sight to your left. The house is completely still—quiet enough for you to hear the buzzing of flies from across the room.

The strange buzzing foreshadows an encounter with the sawflies that lair in this room. They do not attack the party until the doctor wills it. Details on the attack of the sawflies can be found in Event 6: Finding the Iron Key.

**Demonic sawflies** (2): AC 7; MV 12, fly 12 (B); HD 2; hp 11, 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA blood drain (1d4 points of damage), *summon swarm*; SD shrinking; SZ M; ML 12; INT semi (3); AL NE; XP 175; New monster.





Innocence is the first victim in this dark and timeless tale.

Either sawfly immediately shrinks to the size of a gnat if reduced below half of its total hit points. At that point it attempts to flee, dodging any attack with a successful saving throw vs. wands.

When attacking, demonic sawflies appear as giant, reddish-brown daddy longlegs with fly's wings. They can bound up the stairs, shattering the banister and striking with a +2 attack bonus for the charge.

The wall-hanging is actually a calendar. The painting is old and faded but clearly shows the port of Mordentshire as it appeared nearly 100 years ago. The "writing" below shows the days and months of the calendar year 393.

The iron woodstove in the corner contains the ashen remains of Blake, Jr. and Gregory. Helen obsessively protects the ashes of her children. She uses her *portal control* ability to keep the woodstove sealed. Any attempt to destroy or damage the woodstove causes her to manifest and attack the perpetrator.

Helen's statistics are presented in the "The Ramsays" sidebar.

## 2. Dining Room.

A long, dust-covered oak table dominates the dining room. Across the room is an open doorway into the kitchen. Flanking that doorway are a tall grandfather clock and a handsome hickory curio.

The grandfather clock has stopped at one minute before midnight and cannot be reset. Any PC who attempts to move the hands of the clock receives a sharp but harmless jolt of electricity. Persistent attempts (or an attempt to damage the clock) result in a flash of electricity for 2d6 points of damage.

The curio is not locked and contains three shelves of dusty, finely crafted figurines: dogs, lions, and elephants carved from ivory, obsidian, and clay. One of these figurines, an obsidian lion, is magical, although nothing in its appearance differentiates it from the other figurines.

The lion is a *figurine of wondrous power*. The lion is activated by throwing it to the floor, and it obeys whoever activated it until that person wills it to return to statue form. When slain, the *obsidian lion*

transforms into broken chips of obsidian. A *limited wish* spell can repair the shattered figurine.

**Obsidian lion** (1): AC 6; MV 15; HD 3+1; hp 15; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA rear claws (1-4/1-4); SZ M; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 120.

**3. Kitchen.** Lord Ramsay's kitchen is as dusty and untidy as the rest of the manor. PCs looking about here find scantily supplied cabinets, only one of which shows any sign of use. Cobwebs have been swept aside from several canisters of dried spices. Below this cabinet, a broad section of the countertop has been wiped clean of dust. The stove is still warm, and the embers within glow.

The doctor rarely feels the need to eat. When Lord Ramsay is warned of approaching guests by the dark powers of Ravenloft, he sends out his homunculus to bring back a young deer (using a small *bag of holding* to haul the carcass), which Ramsay prepares as his guests surmount the cliffside and cross the island. This explains the relatively clean area of counter space, the recently used spices, and the warm stove (wherein the prepared venison is kept warm).

## 4. New Laboratory.

This room is a chaotic jumble of small bookstands and end tables, all buried under manuals, tomes, and scrolls. Some of the books remain open, with dog-eared pages curled upward and yellowed from exposure. Others are piled askew or lie on the floor as if tossed there long ago and forgotten.

A metal table stands in the center of the room. The table is equipped with five leather restraints to secure hands, feet, and neck. A tray beside the table holds a series of polished razors and scissors, some gauze, a syringe, and a ball of twine. Unlike the dust-covered books and scrolls, the table and tray gleam and sparkle with cleanliness.

Should PCs search the laboratory, they find the books to be manuals and treatises detailing surgery, anatomy, and necromancy. If collected and culled for its finest bits, the material is sufficient to provide a mage with the information

found in a *manual of golems*, although the creature produced is a Ravenloft flesh golem. Organizing the contents of this room requires two days, and several weeks of study are required before work can begin on a golem.

Other items of interest in this room include the doctor's *intellect syringe*, which sits alongside the other surgical tools on the tray, and a single tome that rests alone on a prominent reading stand. This tome is bound in fine crimson leather and has an iron crown embossed on its cover. It is a copy of *The Revelations of the Prince of Twilight*, which recently washed ashore on a bit of flotsam. Lord Ramsay has found it exceedingly complex, but the concept of conjuring Liza's "other half"—a healthier, prettier half—interests him.

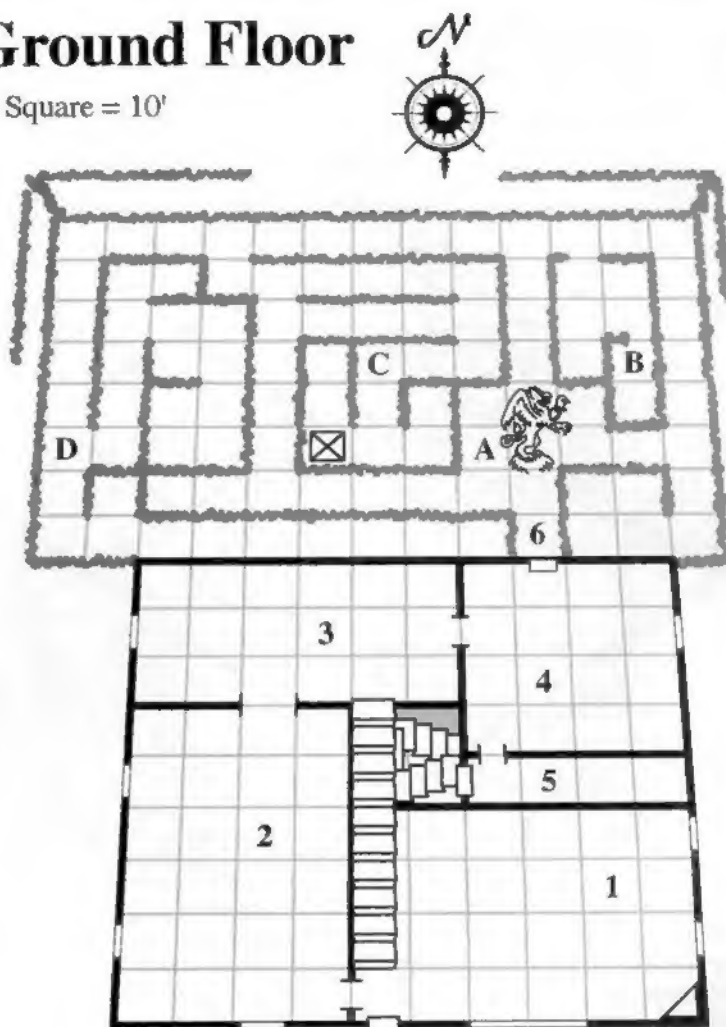
A PC paging through *The Revelations* finds that it begins with a lengthy introduction, which is followed immediately by the statement, "At the beginning, we were meant to have two spirits, one mortal, the other supernatural." The introduction concludes with the lines, "Once sufficient time has passed, and sufficient sacrifices have been made, the two spirits exist in harmony, and may become one once again." Following that are two rituals, *conjure sundered soul* and *spirit's reunification*. Both spells are fully detailed in *DRAGON Magazine* #252 (pages 87-89).

**5. Pantry.** Lord Ramsay's pantry is filled with long shelves stretching into the shadows. The shelves are lined with moldering, mostly empty boxes. Those few boxes that contain dried goods have disintegrated over the years. Near the northern archway is a wooden crate containing several wrapped wheels of cheese. Mold has nearly claimed them, as the poor souls who washed ashore with them died weeks past. It is from this box that the doctor takes the cheese he serves the PCs in Event 2.

**6. The Hedgerow.** The PCs might seek Lord Ramsay in the hedgerow, but he is not there. The doctor has not walked these paths in decades. While the ghosts of Helen and the boys wander most of the house at will, they consider the hedgerow to be their private sanctum and haunt all who travel therein.

## Ground Floor

1 Square = 10'



The thick hedge walls are eight feet high—tall enough to isolate PCs wandering afield. In addition to the ghosts, PCs routinely find their cloaks and clothes catching on briars and sharp branches.

### 6A. The Topiary.

You stand before a large topiary cut in the form of a giant griffon. The beast's wings spread out over two wooden benches positioned at its flanks.

Helen grew this creature herself in the years before she died. As Lord Ramsay estranged himself from his family, Helen devoted herself to her garden. After the

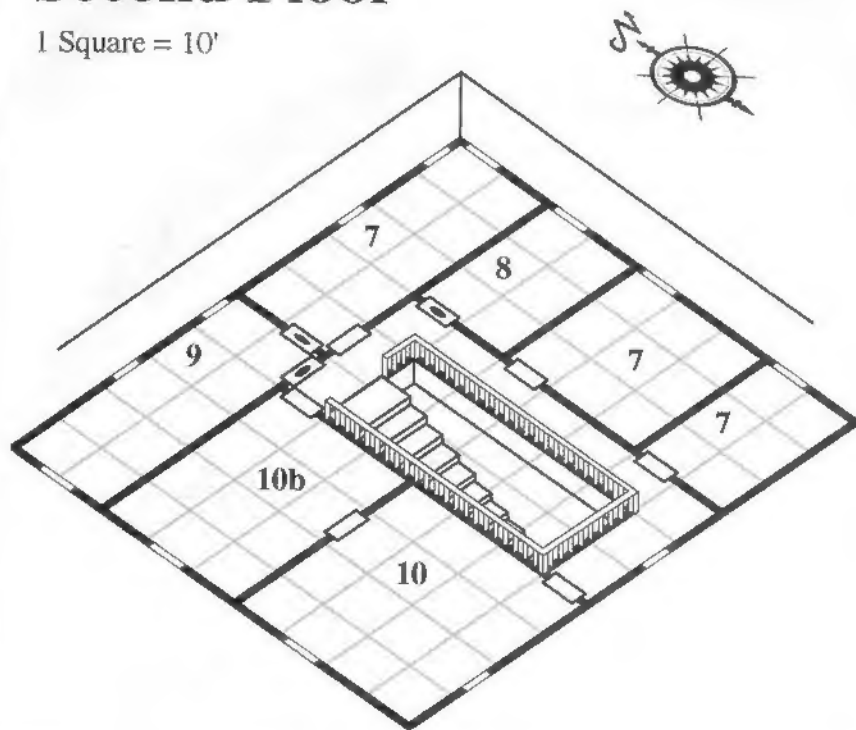
curse settled upon the isle, the topiary became a lingering vestige of goodness. Any PC who comes within arm's reach of the griffon is affected by a *remove fear* spell.

If the PCs enter the hedgerow after hearing Gregory's laughter at the top of the cellar steps (see Event 6: Finding the Iron Key), inform the first PC to approach the topiary that the boy's laughter trails off to the north and east, toward area **6B**.

**6B. Gregory's Rest.** Positioned in this enclave is a low marble bench. In years past, members of the Ramsay family came here to while away the hours or

## Second Floor

1 Square = 10'



contemplate pressing matters. Now, Gregory sits here, awaiting a playmate. When a PC arrives, he manifests. The sight of the boy's desiccated form—one arm crudely amputated, his body horribly burned so that his parched flesh is indistinguishable from his nightclothes, his black eye sockets gazing empty—is enough to warrant a horror check.

After revealing himself, Gregory flies forward, still laughing, and attempts to pass through the first PC who beholds his ghostly form. After one such attack, the ghost-child vanishes in a cloud of thick, sulfurous smoke.

### 6C. Helen's Trap.

A woman's voice whispers from around the corner, deep and full. "Come to me," she says. "I can help you. I can give you escape from this cursed isle!"

The voice belongs to Helen. She tries to lure a PC south from the point marked

on the map, then calls him west at the T-shaped intersection. In actuality, Helen is lurking invisibly to the east, using her *ventriloquism* ability. As the PC turns to walk west, she manifests, attacks from behind with her fiery touch, and attempts to push her victim into the covered, spike-bottomed pit.

PCs falling into the 10'-deep pit suffer 1d6 points of damage plus an additional 2d4 points from the spikes. Pulling oneself off the spikes causes 1d4 points of damage unless help and extreme care is taken by PCs offering assistance.

After attacking, Helen vanishes in cloud of charred woodsmoke, reminiscent of the scent the PCs may have experienced near the woodstove in area 1.

### 6D. Blake, Jr.'s Rest.

Ahead, you catch the scent of charred wood and smoke, but from the path leading east comes the sound of a

This is an attempt on the part of the ghosts to divide the PCs. The odor of smoke and charred wood is attributable to Helen, but she does not manifest at this time. The crying comes from Blake, Jr., who waits in the open area to the east. The first PC to enter the "clearing" sees nothing more than a little boy wearing a hooded cloak huddled on a marble slab. As Blake, Jr. is approached, however, he reaches up and pulls back his hood, revealing a charred skull, his sparse hair matted against wrinkled flesh. Sadly, he cries, "I'm all burnt up!" The boy then disappears.

While not physically damaging, this is certainly a morale breaker. A DM might insist on both fear and horror checks if players do not roleplay their characters' response suitably.

Helen waits until the horror has passed before manifesting directly behind a PC, attacking once, then vanishing once again.

## Second Floor

**7. Bedrooms.** These rooms were once occupied by Gregory, Blake, Jr., and the family servants. The rooms have since been cleaned and prepared for company. Each has a single four-poster bed, vanity, nightstand, and wardrobe.

The clothes in the wardrobes have been beaten and aired recently. PCs familiar with current Mordentshire fashion realize that the clothing is terribly out of date. Should the PCs accept Lord Ramsay's invitation to stay (see Event 2), Lord Ramsay offers the clothes to any PCs who require a change of attire.

**8. Helen's Sewing Room.** The door to this room is locked, and neither Lord Ramsay nor his wife's ghost ever comes here. Both find that the old room harbors too many painful memories.

PCs who successfully bypass the lock find the room almost impenetrably dark. A black tarp has been tacked over the window frame to cover a pane of broken glass (broken by Helen long ago in a fit of rage), and the tall bolts of cloth and crates of sewing materials stacked here throw the room into deep shadows.

This room is not without its terrors. PCs moving into the darkness of this

room find a rare horror known as living hair. At the time of Liza's accident, Helen was hard at work making a new doll for her daughter's collection (located in area 9). Liza was saddened by the prospect of leaving Mordentshire and the toys she dearly loved, and Helen was intent on lightening her spirits.

Forming the body from some bits of cloth and stuffing, Lady Ramsay chose to use her own luxuriant hair to complete the doll. She cut a length off, much more than she would ever need, and had begun work on the doll when tragedy befell her family.

As the curse overtook the isle, the unfinished doll left in the sewing room transformed into living hair. When PCs enter the sewing room, the creature attempts to use its 80% chance to Hide in Shadows to remain unseen, striking from behind with surprise. At first the creature appears to be nothing more than a mass of hair somehow standing upright in a humanoid form. Upon its death, though, the doll at its core can be seen, its painted blue eyes still vibrant as the day Helen Ramsay first brushed them.

**Living hair (1):** AC 7; MV 12; HD 5; hp 31; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; SA thief abilities, strangulation; SD regenerates 2 hit points/round, suffers half damage from blunt weapons; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 16; INT average (9); AL NE; XP 975; New monster.

**9. Liza's Bedroom.** The doors to this room remain locked at all times, and with good reason. Helen Ramsay's ghost guards her daughter's belongings passionately, dreaming of the day when Liza returns to play with them again.

Living inside the walls around the twin doorframes is a swarm of eerily silent scarab beetles attracted to the tomblike atmosphere of the house. If a PC tries to enter Liza's room, Helen shifts the loose boards that form the top of the doorframe, resulting in a groaning from above and a harmless scarab or two dropping onto the neck and shoulders of the person nearest the door. Should PCs ignore this warning, Helen shatters the doorframe, dropping a swarm of scarab beetles that attacks anyone within five feet of either door.



*Anyone who visits Lord Ramsay must stay for the feast ...*

Once unleashed, the swarm crawls under clothing and burrows into flesh.

Further attempts to enter this room cause Helen to manifest in the doorway and fight to keep intruders away. If the battle goes poorly for Helen, both Blake, Jr. and Gregory appear to support their mother. As is also the case with the hedgerow, Lord Ramsay does not enter his daughter's old bedroom.

A thick layer of dust covers the furniture in this room. A small child's bed with faded pink sheets rest against the far wall, and stuffed dolls stand in neatly arranged poses on a shelf over the headboard. A tiny bookshelf holds children's picture books.

**Scarab beetle swarm (1):** AC 4; MV 6, burrow 3; HD 5; hp 19; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg special; SZ T; ML 13; INT non (0); AL N; XP 420; *RAVENLOFT MCA3/16*. The swarm covers a 10' x 10' area, inflicting damage to everyone within that space. Wounds are equal to half the hit points of

the swarm plus the target's base AC. Beetles cling to any PC fleeing the area of effect and continue to inflict damage until destroyed. Edged weapons inflict one point of damage to the swarm and full damage to anyone covered by it. A medium-sized PC can cause the swarm 1d6 points of damage per round by dropping to the floor and rolling about.

#### 10. Master Bedroom.

An unmade four-poster bed stands between the windows of the master bedroom. Near the bed, a book lies open upon the nightstand. Above the headboard hangs a painting of Lord and Lady Ramsay. He appears much younger in the painting, but a young girl seated between them bears closer resemblance to her mother. Someone has cut a wide slash through the painting, leading from Lord Ramsay to his wife but missing the girl completely.



### Selected Notes from the Journal of Lord Blake Ramsay

14 May 387 — We have finished the house. The kind men who helped us have taken leave and returned to their homes in the west wood. I believe wisdom prevailed when I chose this isle for our new home.

Liza plays in the fields, and Helen is pleased with the idea of a hedgerow. I have warned them both of the fens to the west. Any manner of creature could dwell in so murky a place. I fear for my daughter sometimes. She is my only child—my only hope to be remembered when I die.

Regular journal entries follow. Only a few passages stand out:

... managed to keep the plant alive for two weeks after plucking. Chlorophyll content actually increased ...

... Death occurred by the spontaneous collision of so many molecules that the flower tore itself apart. I believe I have witnessed a complete implosion of the plant matter. This is tragic, for I believe I was very close to success ...

... not sure I fully understand it, but after two years of living on this new isle, I believe I have found the secret to instilling life in dead plant matter. A batch of hardy swamproot has lived a full month with no dirt or water, only regular injections of the serum. If only my tests on the natives could be so successful ...

The following passage is written in a mad, scrawling hand that contrasts with the cramped-but-neat style of the rest of the journal:

October 30, 393—Liza is dead! Oh, how can this be? My efforts have proven vain, the plant and animal kingdoms too broadly separated for any of my recent studies to be useful. The fall caused too much internal damage. Many organs were crushed, and an arm was severed by the sharp cliff stones. But what is that compared to the loss of her precious mind? My daughter! My loving, intelligent daughter! I shall set this catastrophe aright! You will not die, my beloved.

Gregory needs no mind, for his deformities all but exclude him from society. Should he enter the world to speak my praises, he would be shunned and ridiculed. He shall provide you the life you need, fair Liza.

Likewise, Blake, Jr. will become nothing more than a dull fool. It is clear from one look upon his glassy countenance that his growth has been stopped by some dark power. He, too, shall supply the limbs. The organs must come from Helen! Yes, my petite wife, you shall be the perfect donor for young Liza.

... bodies had to be disposed of somehow. Why not let them warm the place? I thought. Heaven forgive me. I believe I felt Helen in the room as the fires burned away the remains. But if she has come to haunt me, then it is the least of my worries ...

... keep the girl in the laboratory until someone with suitable eyes comes. Fate shall provide ...

... Something perplexes me, though. By my best estimates, two days have passed since Hallow's Eve, yet the heavens remain unmoved. It is still one minute to midnight, by the moon and the dining room clock, which has stopped. I have no idea at what time I should set it ...

... It seems the sun never shall shine again on my household. What have I done?

The journal entries continue for another sixty or seventy pages from this point, and they vary in their degree of coherence and legibility. Often, Lord Ramsay is writing to his daughter, who is apparently trapped in the cellar. The last entry, freshly written, reads as follows:

I dreamt of visitors while I slept. Awaking, I peered out the window to see a small raft carrying the survivors of a shipwreck toward the isle. 'Tis an omen! Oh, darling, I shall yet find the eyes for your pretty face. Then I shall resume my studies. When I have grown too old to continue, you will be of marrying age, I am sure, and then you will take my work to the mainland and find a husband who will publish these findings, and the two of you shall live happily on the proceeds of my life's work which shall be known throughout the land!

They are nearing the shore. I must prepare the guestrooms. Prepare, Liza, for our wait is nearly over!

The book on the nightstand is Blake Ramsay's journal. A cursory examination reveals that most of the entries are dated "October 30, 393." Characters skimming through the journal learn tidbits as provided in the "Selected Notes from the Journal of Lord Blake Ramsay" sidebar.

Lord Ramsay keeps a locked strongbox under the bed. It is not trapped. Inside the box are his most precious documents. PCs find the beginnings of lab write-ups, carefully drawn diagrams of the human anatomy with cryptic annotations ("Sensitive if too much spleen" or "Increases threshold of pain"), and a letter Liza wrote long ago, before her fall, expressing her love for her father. Until the PCs make an enemy of Lord Ramsay (see Event 4), the doctor keeps the iron

key to area 13 in the strongbox as well. After the PCs talk to Liza, though, Lord Ramsay ties the key to his belt, feeling much safer with it on his person. If the PCs find the key in this room, touching it immediately brings about the effects of the Nightstorm, explained in Event 8.

At some point while the PCs search the master bedroom, have individual PCs roll a Wisdom check. Those who succeed see the form of a human female materialize beneath the top sheet on the bed. For a moment the shape remains still, but then the head turns slowly to the side, as if regarding the PCs. This allows the PCs one round to respond and direct their attention fully upon the sheet.

The sheet (for that is what the horrid creature upon Lord Ramsay's bed truly

is) lurches into an upright position, maintaining its vaguely humanoid appearance as it waves, flutters, and gyrates in the air. All PCs focused on this event must make a successful fear check or run screaming from the room. The sheet lopes after the first PC to flee, trying to envelop the victim in its suffocating white folds.

**Sheet (1):** AC 9; MV 12; HD 6; hp 26; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-2; SA poison, suffocation; SD blunt weapons inflict 1 point of damage per hit (plus magical and Strength bonuses); SZ M; ML 14; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 1,400; New monster.

**10b. Bath.** The chamber adjacent to the master bedroom contains a bath, a wash

basin, a rack of dusty towels, and a cedar cabinet filled with shelves of folded linens.

Set into the ceiling of the room is a trapdoor leading to the attic (area 11). A short cord hanging from the trapdoor allows PCs to reach up and pull it open. Opening the trapdoor unfolds a set of creaky steps. The steps are safe to climb.

**11. Attic (not shown on map).** The attic is as large as the second floor of the manor, but the ceiling is pitched and varies in height from three to seven feet. The trapdoor leading to the attic is located in area 10b. (See above for details.)

Pulling open the trapdoor releases the stench of a charnel house, but the zombies trapped above never leave their lair until summoned by Lord Ramsay during Event 7. These creatures are the undead remains of past victims in the doctor's quest to restore life to his daughter. Some were natives of the island; others are desiccated sailors washed ashore in the night. All have been drained of cerebral fluid and have had their eyes surgically removed.

The zombies attack any PC who attempts to climb the rickety wooden steps that unfold from the trapdoor. Such attacks gain a +2 bonus due to higher ground. If the PCs battle the zombies, Lord Ramsay does not intercede, hoping that the party is defeated.

Should the PCs climb the steps, they find a cleverly constructed winch and pulley system attached with a harness at one end. The whole is constructed to easily swing out over the trapdoor opening. Lord Ramsay uses this device to haul the bodies of his victims into the attic.

The attic itself is dark. The zombies have destroyed everything of interest, leaving only a carpet of splinters and torn fabric across the floor.

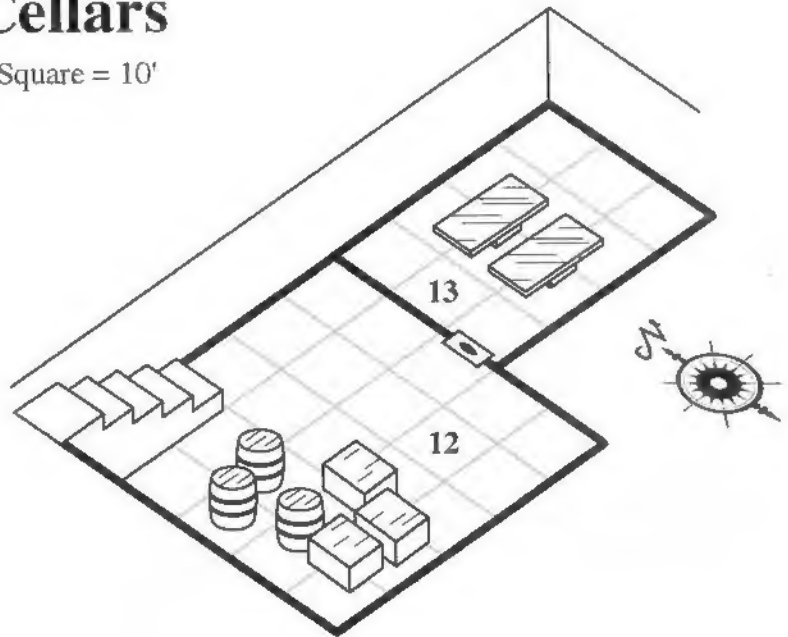
**Zombies (11):** AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *fear*, *poison*, *paralysis*, *death magic*, and *cold-based attacks*; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM/373.

## Cellars

**12. Storage.** PCs require a light source to discern the contents of this root cellar:

## Cellars

1 Square = 10'



Crates and barrels stacked in odd piles around this room cast long shadows to the south. These shadows are absorbed into utter darkness among the thick tangle of webs in that portion of the room.

A large iron door has been set in the stonework of the east wall, a formidable lock built into the door beneath the knob. Soft crying comes from behind the iron door.

The crates stacked around the cellar contain meat that Blake feeds his daughter. The meat is old and crawling with maggots. The barrels contain foul water.

Before leaving Mordentshire, Lord Ramsay hired a local witch to brew him a salve that would seal the door to his laboratory from anyone he did not want to open it. When rubbed into the keyhole and onto the proper matching key, this salve renders the lock immune to picking attempts and *knock* spells, though greater magic penetrates it. A *dispel magic* successfully cast against 12th-level magic undoes the witch's magic, enabling PCs to pick the lock or open the door magically. The iron key to this door is hidden in area 10.

Opening the door by any means other than the iron key brings the Nightstorm, as detailed under Event 8 below.

Neither Helen nor either of the boys ever comes here. They are repulsed by this area just as Lord Ramsay is repulsed by the hedgerow (area 6).

From this room, PCs unable to free Liza may converse with her through the laboratory door. The PCs' first meeting with Lord Ramsay's daughter is detailed in Event 5: Meeting Liza.

The webs in the southern portion of the room are of the living variety. They obey Lord Ramsay's wishes, fight on his behalf, or attack anyone who has made an enemy of the doctor.

**Living webs (2):** AC 9; MV 6; HD 4; hp 19, 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA *lightning bolt* (inflicts 3d4 points of damage, usable twice/turn); SD electricity increases web's size; immune to fire, water, heat, and cold; divided by edged weapons; suffers half damage from blunt weapons; SZ M; ML 9; INT semi (4); AL N; XP 650; MCA3/117.

**13. The Old Laboratory.** Any PC who enters this room encounters Liza and inadvertently triggers the Nightstorm, as detailed in Events 5 and 8 respectively.

Two steel tables stand in the middle of the floor, and the walls are lined with shelves full of alchemical apparatus, surgical supplies, and the like. Among these supplies is a vial containing the salve Lord Ramsay used to secure the door to the laboratory. (See area 12 above.) Enough remains of the oily elixir to coat two locks and their associated keys.

A bookshelf contains several tomes on anatomy and alchemy. One tome, titled *The Alchemist's Codex*, describes half of the process for creating homunculi. (The process requires an alchemist and a wizard. The tome describes the alchemist's half of the labor. When Lord Ramsay first set about creating his homunculous, he worked in tandem with a Mordentshire witch who possessed the spells and knowledge needed to complete the creation.) *The Alchemist's Codex* could be sold to an interested buyer for 500 gp.

## Events

This section of the adventure provides a path down which the adventure is likely to progress. DMs are encouraged to allow player ingenuity to guide the adventure down new avenues, with the Nightstorm providing a framework for the eventual conclusion.

### Event 1: The Arrival

The adventure begins with the PCs' life raft washing ashore on Lord Ramsay's island. Individual DMs are encouraged to incorporate the events leading up to this occurrence into their own campaigns as they see fit. The following text may be read or paraphrased to the players as they arrive on the island:

The storm tore your ship apart, leaving you stranded on a flimsy raft without food or water. Your clothes are tattered and soaked. Luckily, though, you managed to salvage your most precious personal belongings.

The turbulent sea carries your tiny craft into calmer waters, and soon you are engulfed by an impenetrable mist.

Hours pass, and still the sun has not risen. When the mist parts, you find the currents pushing you toward a rocky shore at the base of a towering

cliff. With newfound vigor, you drag the raft ashore and look up the steep precipice, seeing stormclouds and a crescent moon directly overhead.

The rocks that form the narrow shoreline offer no sanctuary. The sea seems calm now, but fomenting tides could dash you against the rocks and shatter your bones with ease. Your only escape from the treacherous sea is up the narrow, natural outcroppings and ledges that scale the cliff face. Apart from these abundant handholds, you see only the underside of a thick bank of fog that wreaths the island near the top of the cliff.

Read or paraphrase the following only if Luther is with the party:

Luther, the elven first mate of the *Bluesprite*, crouches and scowls at the cliffside. After a moment he sighs and, with little more than a glance back in your direction, steps toward the nearest outcropping to begin his ascent.

Luther is exhausted and angry at the situation. So long as the PCs do not take his attitude as a personal affront, he holds nothing against them. Should he survive the impending ordeal, he could even befriend the PCs.

Climbing should be harrowing, with rocks skittering out of sight after near missteps, but no one should be injured except in cases of extreme negligence. The cliffs rise three hundred feet from the sea, so any character who slips with no chance of being caught or snagged is likely plummeting to his death.

Each character needs to make two successful climbing checks to scale the cliff face. PCs receive a +40% modifier to climbing rolls for "abundant handholds." Unskilled climbers have an 80% chance to scale the cliffside, modified for armor and race as detailed in Chapter 14 of the *Player's Handbook*.

A PC may attempt to grab hold of a falling character; such an action requires a successful Dexterity check (to grab the falling character) followed by another successful climbing check (to secure oneself while holding onto the falling character). If the climbing check fails, both

PCs fall. The DM might allow falling PCs to make a Dexterity check to catch the rock face. If successful, the PCs do not fall; however, they must make an extra climbing check to reach the top.

As PCs reach the top, the DM may either paraphrase or read the following to the PCs:

The clouds part, and the faint light of a crescent moon reveals a modest two-story home perched near the cliff's edge. A small porch with three steps leads to the front door. The paint has begun to chip, the roof has lost many of its ghostly-gray tiles, and ivy grows thick along the walls. The windows are all dark.

Just as it seems certain that no one could live in this old ruin, an ominous light appears in an upstairs window. As quickly as it appeared, the flickering light is gone, leaving you to wonder whether you even saw it at all.

### Event 2: The Greeting

The PCs might feel compelled to knock if they believe someone is home; desperate for shelter, they might also enter the house uninvited. Neither action changes the mood of the greeting they receive from Lord Ramsay. PCs who knock simply meet him at the front door rather than inside the manor.

If PCs scout the perimeter of the house, describe for them the tall, thorny wall of the hedge-maze behind the house. Their position also commands a view of the lowlands of the isle, which lead down a gentle slope to the edge of a thick, crowded forest of deciduous trees in autumnal shades. Remind those PCs intent on scaling the hedgerow of their exhaustion and the chills of being soaked to the bone in the middle of the night. This should serve as discouragement enough for the victims of such a recent shipwreck, but those who do not turn away find themselves at the mercy of Lord Ramsay's family before they ever meet the doctor himself. (See area 6.)

When the PCs first enter the parlor (area 1), the description of that room should be read or paraphrased to them.

If the party enters without waiting for Lord Ramsay to reach the door, he

appears on the second-floor balcony 1 round after they enter the parlor. PCs who make a successful Wisdom check note that the old floorboards do not creak to announce his arrival.

Whether the PCs meet Lord Ramsay at the door or greet him once inside the house, the following text describes the PCs' first encounter with the mad doctor:

The middle-aged man before you has receding gray hair that forms unruly tufts behind his ears. His eyes squint as if he just awoke. His nightrobe tells of considerable wealth, but it is wrinkled as if just pulled from a heap on the floor. In his hand he holds the iron sconce of a flickering candle.

For a brief moment he stares at you in silence. The unease passes quickly as his eyes widen and he exclaims in a shrill voice, "Oh! Dear me! You've come already!"

In a confused flurry of action, he steps toward you and away, gestures for you to follow, seems ready to flourish and display his home, then thinks better of it. All the while the gentleman welcomes you to his house, ushers you toward the dusty furniture, and lights the oil lamps set about the parlor. Clouds of dust rise in his wake.

Lord Ramsay is perfectly harmless at this point. He apologizes for not tidying up sooner and admits that he has not received many callers since his wife died in a tragic accident. If asked about the accident, the doctor pretends not to hear the question and attempts to change the subject to introductions or other banter. When pressed on the matter, Lord Ramsay concedes, dishonestly, that his wife was taken from him after she fell from the cliffs near the house.

If asked his name, he apologizes profusely for his rudeness and introduces himself as Lord Blake Ramsay, formerly of Mordentshire. If asked how he knew the PCs were coming, he tells them truthfully that he saw their craft from his bedroom window. He knew the PCs would need rooms for the night, so he went about preparing the upstairs bedrooms.

The doctor's giddiness and anxiety are genuine. In the back of his mind he is already considering which visitor might

best serve as a donor for his daughter. At some point early in the discussion, the obviously preoccupied doctor stares unabashedly into each PCs' eyes. When he finds an elf or a charismatic female PC, he comments on the beauty of that person's eyes.

Upon meeting Luther (or the NPC the DM has chosen to serve as the doctor's primary target), Ramsay compliments the fellow several times. In Luther's case, such flattery puts the elf somewhat more at ease. After a few minutes, his ego has fed enough that he might defend Lord Ramsay against PCs who take their suspicion of the doctor too far. Luther tells blatantly rude PCs that they are being too hard on a man who has offered them respite and sanctuary. Luther is no fool, but he is clearly predisposed to favor someone who appreciates him.

Lord Ramsay attempts to cut off any arguments with a renewed offer to go upstairs and change into dry clothes. Luther cocks an eyebrow, as if such congeniality proves his argument, and follows the doctor to the second floor.

If any PC questions Lord Ramsay about his wife's demise or approaches the iron woodstove, a foul odor like charred wood wafts through the room. This is the ghost of Helen. Lord Ramsay turns pale and attempts to hurry the PCs upstairs, insisting that the bedrooms are ready and much cleaner than the parlor.

Should a PC attempt to open the woodstove, Helen is quick to use her *portal control* ability to secure it while the stench in the room intensifies. Repeated attempts infuriate Lord Ramsay, who fears his wife might slay the PCs before they can donate their eyes to Liza. He summons the sawflies to attack.

If the PCs manage to open the woodstove doors before Event 8, they merely uncover the charred bones and ashen remains of Lord Ramsay's family.

Should the PCs ever appear ready to attack Lord Ramsay, he attempts to flee to the dining room, activates his *obsidian lion* (see area 2 for details), and runs to his lab (area 4). The lion attacks anyone who tries to follow the good doctor. If Ramsay is "slain," proceed with Event 6.

The statistics for Lord Ramsay and his family are presented in "The Ramsays" sidebar

### Event 3: A Late Dinner

Assuming the PCs follow, Lord Ramsay leads them upstairs to the three guest bedrooms (see area 7). One of these belonged to a manservant who accompanied the Ramsays to the island but died of natural causes soon after the house was built. The other two belonged to Lord Ramsay's sons, Gregory and Blake, Jr. No hint of the boys' presence remains in the house, but any PC sleeping in either boy's room is plagued with nightmares inspired by the boys' ghosts. In these dreams, Lord Ramsay chases the dreamer across a bleak, storm-swept landscape, shouting wildly of his plans to dismember his quarry, luridly detailing how he plans to remove the PC's eyes and burn what remains.

Each guest room contains a single bed large enough for two. Lord Ramsay, playing the role of a doting housekeeper, leads the PCs to separate rooms. He tries to get Luther (or his primary target) to sleep alone or with one other character. Luther accepts the offer appreciatively unless the PCs object on his behalf.

Once the PCs are situated in their rooms, Lord Ramsay smiles. He walks from room to room, offering the following statement to each of his guests:

"Please, feel free to look through the wardrobes and get yourselves out of those wet things. I'm off to the kitchen to prepare a small tray of food for you. I shant be long."

Lord Ramsay hurries out of the room, muttering to himself about cheese and vegetables. You hear his footsteps fading as he scurries downstairs and into the dining room.

Give the PCs about five minutes in game time to change clothes and meet with one another. Blake has hung sets of well-tailored clothing in each wardrobe; these fashions are one hundred years out of date, but only those familiar with present-day Mordentshire would know this.

By now, the PCs probably distrust the doctor, especially if their actions brought about the malodorous manifestation of Helen in the parlor. Such a response is fine; let them share their worries with one another, and then have Blake



Ramsay return with a clanging tray of foodstuffs and two pitchers.

On the tray is enough food for the entire party. The doctor stops in each room, starting with the character or NPC he has chosen as Liza's donor. He offers cuts of cheese and venison from the forest, both smelling delicious and appearing tasty. Remind players that even suspicious PCs are probably very hungry, and their own supplies were most likely lost in the shipwreck. Also, Lord Ramsay is watching like a very concerned host, whom they might not want to upset.

The food is heavily spiced and a bit undercooked, but otherwise quite edible.

#### Event 4: Abducted!

As the PCs settle in for the night, taking whatever precautions they deem necessary to protect themselves against the unknown, be careful to provide plenty of atmospheric description. The wind whistles outside, rattling loose shutters. Old boards settle. Rats scurry along the walls. Unfortunately for the PCs, this last sound common to the manor is not as identifiable as it appears.

The scratching sound of "scurrying rats" is actually the faint scraping of wings from the doctor's homonculous servant. The homonculous flutters through narrow passages between the rooms (too small even for a gnome), peeking in on the PCs through cracks in the walls. It relays all information to its master via telepathic link.

Once Lord Ramsay is certain that most PCs are asleep, he sends the homonculous into the room to dispatch any guards. The stealthy little creature creeps through a hole in the back corner of the wardrobe and creeps up on anyone awake. The homonculous has a 65% chance to Hide in Shadows and Move Silently for purposes of this endeavor. The homonculous attempts to bite the PC from behind (+4 bonus to attack rolls; no Dexterity or shield modifiers to AC). If this attack is successful, the homonculous bites anyone sleeping in the room, then attacks any guards still awake elsewhere in the manor.

Assuming the homonculous is successful, Ramsay then enters the room of

his chosen prey by means of his *shadow door* ability. It is very difficult to rid a room completely of shadows, and the doctor never thinks twice about arriving in the wardrobe or under the bed. If the homonculous failed in its task, the doctor quickly "sedates" his drowsy victim (or a PC guard) using an old sock full of blunt stones; any hit to the head inflicts 1 point of damage and requires the victim to make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or be knocked unconscious. Lord Ramsay's attempt to sap his opponent requires an attack roll with a -4 penalty. (Treat as a called shot to the head.)

If the guards are dispatched quietly, Lord Ramsay turns his attention toward removing the chosen NPC to the new laboratory (area 4). The doctor is not as strong as he once was, so he is forced to cradle his victim beneath the shoulders and drag him or her down the steps.

The noise of the victim's trailing feet thudding down the steps might well awake PCs. Sleeping PCs may roll a Constitution check. Success indicates that the PC awakens to the noise. If more than one PC awakes, the DM might want to state that a random character awakes to the sound of boards creaking overhead, alluding to the zombies trapped in the attic. (See area 11 for details.)

PCs who investigate the sound of their companion being dragged down the steps need only peer over the second-floor banister to see the doctor

Lord Ramsay stands at the base of the staircase. He has just finished dragging his victim to the bottom of the steps and is turning the corner into the dining room. The balcony floorboards creak under your weight, and the doctor looks up.

The light of madness shines in his eyes as he shakes his fist at you and cries, "Damn you! I just want the eyes!"

Ordering the homonculous to attack, Lord Ramsay flees to the dining room (area 2), abandoning his victim for the moment, if necessary, to reach the curio. PCs chasing after him enter melee range and should roll initiative immediately. If the doctor reaches the curio, read or paraphrase the following.

Lord Ramsay tugs open the glass door of the curio and removes a smooth figurine. Turning, he hurls it blindly toward you. As the figurine strikes the floor, it changes into a mighty, black-maned lion.

Ramsay tries to use the chaos created by the *obsidian lion* to drag the chosen NPC to area 5, and from there down the cellar steps. Failing that, he flees to the new laboratory (area 4), grabs a scalpel from the tray, and fights "to the death." (The scalpel inflicts 1-2 points of damage per hit.) If "slam," the doctor perpetuates this illusion for as long as is convenient, studying the PCs quietly. Should Lord Ramsay overhear Liza telling the PCs about the iron key in area 10, he immediately uses his *shadow door* ability to retrieve it. Otherwise, there is a 40% chance per subsequent event that the doctor goes to his bedroom and removes the key "for safekeeping." He feels much safer knowing the precious item is on his person.

Should no PCs awaken to the sound of Lord Ramsay's abduction, the chosen NPC is slain within the hour, his cerebral fluids taken via Lord Ramsay's *intellect syringe*, his eyes transplanted into Liza and ultimately corrupted, and his body added to the unholy host in the attic. When the party awakes, night still darkens the sky, and the doctor inquires as to what happened to their friend.

As the hours pass by, the doctor becomes more and more edgy as he suspects the PCs plan to leave his home. Trying to leave leads to the events detailed under Event 7. Of course, PCs foolish enough to spend another night in the house can expect to have another friend vanish under the same mysterious circumstances.

**Homonculous** (1): AC 6; MV 6, fly 18 (B); HD 2; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1, Dmg 1-3; SA bite causes sleep for 5d6 rounds; SZ T; ML 16; INT genius (17); AL CE; XP 120; MM/192, small bag of holding.

If Lord Ramsay is "slain," the homonculous is not destroyed; instead, it is struck by a *confusion* spell for one round until Lord Ramsay "reforms." If the homonculous is killed, it is forever destroyed, and Lord Ramsay falls over as if slain. So long as the family curse

remains unbroken, the doctor recovers after 1 round. Even if the PCs completely destroy Lord Ramsay's body, it reforms and reappears elsewhere in the house; see "The Ramsays" sidebar for details.

#### Event 5: Meeting Liza

After the botched abduction of the chosen NPC and the "death" and subsequent disappearance of Lord Ramsay, any PCs still sleeping in the guest rooms awaken from their nightmarish slumber.

What follows is probably a search of the premises. Some PCs might want to find the man who tried to kill their companion. Others might be interested in treasure hunting. More pragmatic PCs might seek a way to escape the isle. At some point, the PCs' search should lead to the cellar. Read or paraphrase the following description the first time the door to the cellar (in area 5) is opened.

Looking through the shadowy doorway, you inhale the musty air of a basement mingled with the cloying scent of rotting meat. The light of a single lantern burns below. In the silence following the screeching hinges, the cries of a young girl can be heard.

As PCs continue into the cellar, proceed with the description of area 12. The sound of crying is clearly issuing from beyond the iron door leading to area 13.

If the PCs try speaking through the keyhole, they find that Liza can hear them and respond. Amid her broken sobs, she begs them to unlock the door and free her from the "scary room." She knows that her father keeps the key to the door in a strongbox in his bedroom (area 10).

Liza reveals her (apparent) age and describes the devices in the lab around her from a child's frightened perspective. Liza is clearly a little girl frightened of her prison. If the PCs need to find the key, proceed with Event 6; if the PCs have the key and unlock the door, proceed with Event 8.

#### Event 6: Finding the Iron Key

After speaking with Liza, the PCs might want to rescue the little girl. To keep PCs out of area 13, Lord Ramsay takes the



*Lord Ramsay's homonculous patiently stalks its next victim.*

iron key from area 10 and keeps it on his person. Killing Lord Ramsay causes his body (and the iron key) to vanish into shadow. If the PCs capture Lord Ramsay rather than kill him, they can remove the key from his person. In the meantime, Lord Ramsay does his best to escape. He can summon rats to chew discreetly through his bonds or command the demonic sawflies in area 1 to distract the PCs long enough for him to leap into a patch of shadow.

Once he has the iron key, Lord Ramsay tries his best to hide from the PCs (while never leaving the manor). If the PCs have not yet encountered the Ramsay ghosts in the hedgerow, an invitation is extended at this time. As the PCs leave the cellar and enter area 4, read or paraphrase the following description:

As you leave the cellar, the back door blows open. A path leads into the tall,

thorny hedgerow behind the house. In the distance, faint moonlight peeks through the clouds, illuminating a large topiary, although you cannot determine its exact shape.

You hear something chilling from within the hedgerow—the soft laughter of a little boy.

Proceed with the description of area 6 if the PCs enter the hedgerow.

If the PCs ignore the hedgerow or survive the harrowing encounters therein, they should eventually return to the house.

When the PCs next enter the parlor (area 1), they find that the number of flies buzzing about the room has increased drastically. At the behest of Lord Ramsay, the two demonic sawflies dwelling in the parlor have summoned swarms of gnats and flies. The swarms make spellcasting in the parlor impossible and inflict 2–5

points of damage to any character trying to cast spells or perform some hostile action. PCs who spend a full round swatting the insects suffer only 1 point of damage. While the PCs contend with these mundane insects, the sawflies grow to their full six-foot height and attack anyone trying to climb the stairs.

### Techniques of Horror

While they search the house, feel free to drop in tidbits of horror and paranoia to keep the PCs from focusing entirely on the mystery set before them. Some possible "tidbits" include:

- While the PCs are distracted (either battling one of the manor's denizens or listening to the sound of zombies clambering in the attic), the sound of a little boy's giggling and scampering footsteps echo from the direction of the master bedroom (area 10).

- If the PCs insult the Ramsay family or do something to anger Helen or the boys, Lady Ramsay retaliates for the insult by opening all of the manor doors, then slamming them abruptly one after another. This is followed by a wave of heat and the strong odor of woodsmoke.

- The window on the second floor landing is open, and a chill breeze is making the house uncomfortably cold. Helen has chosen to discomfort the PCs by using her *portal control* ability to keep the window from closing. The window resists being shut as if affected by magic of 12th level. At the DM's option, the window could either slam shut the round after a character tries to force it closed, or it could remain open to slam down on someone trying to escape the conflagration during the Nightstorm (see Event 8) for 2d4 points of damage.

- A randomly chosen PC is overcome with claustrophobia and nyctophobia. For a moment, the character falls to his knees, completely enrapt in the sensation. After a few seconds it passes, leaving the PC with a burning desire to find the iron key and free Liza from her imprisonment. A successful saving throw vs. spell allows the PC to resist the urge. The urge does not go away, however, and saving throws must continue each turn until the cellar door is opened.

### Event 7: The Madman Strikes

This encounter assumes that the PCs have not obtained the iron key and have angered Lord Ramsay by intruding upon the master bedroom. By now, the PCs should have some clues to the nature of the curse on the Ramsay family. They might not know what releasing Liza will accomplish, but they probably know that breaking the curse is somehow keyed to just that event.

Thwarting Lord Ramsay's experiments and rooting through his belongings is too much for the mad doctor to bear. Lord Ramsay confronts the PCs with his pistol cocked and loaded. He tries to confront the PCs on the second floor—if not in the master bedroom, then certainly the upstairs hallway. Any PCs still searching for the iron key can see it hanging from the doctor's belt.

As the doctor takes his first shot, the zombies in the attic begin crashing through the ceiling, attacking PCs at the end of the next round. The zombies drop at the rate of two per round.

After firing his pistol, Lord Ramsay charges into melee without regard for his own safety, his rage granting him a +2 bonus to attacks and worsening his AC by 2. If felled, he rises again in 1 round. Should he find the room empty and the iron key missing upon regaining consciousness, he charges to the cellar, where he is sure he will find the PCs.

### Event 8: The Nightstorm

When the dark powers cursed the Ramsays, the iron key's magic was subtly altered. Now, it not only provides entrance to the old laboratory (and the means to freeing Liza) but also, in the hands of anyone but Lord Ramsay, sets off a chain reaction of magic and nature known as the Nightstorm.

The Nightstorm begins when the door to area 13 is opened and Liza is released. (See "Liza Unleashed!" below.) Lord Ramsay and the living webs in area 12 do their utmost to keep the PCs from unlocking the door to area 13. So long as Liza remains trapped, the Nightstorm does not manifest.

**Round 1:** Thunder rolls through the sky as the storm that has been brewing for close to a century prepares to unleash

its fury. Winds begin to gust, making the old rafters groan and the window panes rattle. Chill breezes cut through the aged walls of the house.

**Round 2:** The storm abruptly sweeps over the island. Rain hammers against the roof tiles and tears shutters from the windows. At the end of the round, several windows shatter, pelting the PCs with shards of glass and driving rain. The storm inflicts no damage but imposes a +2 initiative penalty to all corporeal beings in the house on this round and all subsequent rounds.

**Round 3:** Lightning strikes the house. The dry boards erupt like kindling, engulfing the attic in flames. Any surviving zombies clamber downstairs, along with the scarab beetle swarm if the PCs have not yet dealt with it. By the end of the round, smoke fills the second story as the storm fans the flames.

Anyone in the parlor when the lightning strikes sees the heretofore-sealed woodstove doors burst open. A blazing inferno fills the stove, and tormented screams can be heard from within. From the depths of the fire (which seems to reach well beyond the recesses of the stove), shadowy forms claw their way toward release.

**Round 4:** Any PCs remaining on the smoke-filled second floor must make a successful Constitution check to stay conscious. Every round hereafter, PCs must continue to roll checks with a cumulative -2 penalty per round. Any PC who fails a check falls unconscious and dies of smoke inhalation in 3-6 rounds until rescued and taken to a place with fresh air.

**Round 5:** Assuming it has not been destroyed, the living hair bursts from the sewing room (area 8) and makes a mad dash for the front door. It lopes indiscriminately into zombies and PCs alike, attacking anything that bars its escape.

Fire consumes the second floor of the manor. Unprotected PCs or creatures on this level suffer 2d6 points of damage per round. PCs and other breathing creatures must make a Constitution check each round to avoid the effects of smoke inhalation (see above).

**Rounds 6-8:** The fires spread to the ground floor, consuming the entire house at the end of Round 8.

## The Ramsays

**Blake Ramsay**, 0-level male human, AC 8; MV 12; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (scalpel) or 1-8 (snaplock pistol); SD shadow door, invulnerability; Str 8; Dex 16; Con 15; Int 17; Wis 14; Cha 12; ML 18; AL CE; XP 120.

Due to the powerful curse that the doctor has brought onto his family, he can be killed only if flames engulf his entire family at once. Any blow that would indicate death merely places him in a deathlike state for 1 round, from which he awakens fully rejuvenated and aware. Lord Ramsay also has a control over the unnatural creatures of his isle, including the demonic sawflies, death linen, living webs, and zombies. He can also cast shadow door at will, vanishing into one shadow and emerging from another, but only within the confines of the manor.

If captured, Lord Ramsay does not bend to reach a patch of shadow and escape. Upon being hit, his shadow door ability, any ropes or bonds used to ensnare him fall harmlessly to the floor. Lord Ramsay cannot leave the manor. If forcibly removed from the premises, he fades away and reappears somewhere inside the house. Likewise, if his body is destroyed utterly, Ramsay reforms after a round, reappearing somewhere inside the house.

If asked the time, Ramsay states that the clock in the dining room stopped

working long ago. He has no recollection of when he last saw the sun.

**Helen, Gregory, and Blake, Jr.** (second magnitude, mutable, preserved, ghostly, anchored to their home): AC 6; MV 6; Str 24 (A); HD 4; hp 21 (Helen); 16 (the boys); THAC0 16; #AT 3; Dmg special, SA ventriloquism (Helen only), portal control (Helen only), mutable, form, flight, SD, and a better weapon to his name: *to sleep, charm, hold, fear, paralysis, death magic, and cold-based attacks*; ML 20; AL CE; XP 2,000 (Helen); 1,400 (the boys).

All three ghosts retain the heat of the fires that consumed their bodies, and their burning touch inflicts painful wounds. Helen's touch is more fearsome than that of the boys, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per successful hit. The boys' touch inflicts 1d6 points of damage per hit. By slipping into the Border Ethereal, these ghosts enjoy an innate invisibility power, but they must manifest to attack. If slain, they return to full strength in one turn, as long as the curse remains unbroken.

Helen's special portal control ability allows her to effectively lock any door, window, cabinet, or other portal, either in an open or shut position. The spell otherwise mimics the spell *secret lock* as if cast by a 12th-level mage.

Helen and the boys exist to torment Lord Ramsay for his crimes. They

appear charred and eyeless, clad in the nightclothes in which they were burned. Aside from a malformed face and hunched back, Gregory's right arm was crudely amputated for his sister as was Blake Jr.'s right leg.

**Liza Ramsay** (flesh golem): AC 7; MV 12; HD 9; hp 40; THAC0 11; #AT 2; Dmg 2d4/2d4; SA strangulation, SD spell immunity, #1 or better weapon to hit; SZ S; ML 20; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 5,000; RAVENLOFT MCA3/47. Liza is smaller than most RAVENLOFT flesh golems and inflicts less damage. If Liza hits with both fists in the same round, she can strangle her opponent on successive rounds for 3d4 points of damage per round. Liza is immune to cold and lightning, and she is unaffected by spells that do not deal damage directly.

Liza is dressed as a young lady, wearing a fine period dress with lace frills, white gloves, and stockings. Though shaved bald, a convincing silver-hued wig covers the rude scars from the surgery that gave her "life."

Liza Ramsay is the focal point of the curse on the Ramsay family. While her father muttered to himself and stitched her broken form back together, he made an unwitting pact with the dark powers. In exchange for a mockery of life, the entire family was cast into a nighttime realm of undeath.

## Liza Unleashed!

When the PCs reach the cellar with the key, Liza cries out for mercy from beyond the sealed door. If the PCs open the door to area 13, read or paraphrase the following.

The iron key turns in the lock and the door swings open of its own volition. Squealing with glee, a girl of no more than twelve years rushes out, arms extended, tears streaming from her shut eyes. Emaciated and pale, she collapses in your arms.

If Lord Ramsay is in the cellar at this point, he uses his shadow door ability to flee the instant Liza is freed.

Liza refuses to open her eyes until she is carried to the top of the steps. She allows a PC to carry her from the cellar if one is willing. As the house shudders and burns, the quickest escape seems to be through the back door into the hedgerow (area 6), where astute PCs notice that the griffon topiary is missing.

Lord Ramsay is unable to flee the burning house. As the PCs carry Liza from the manor, regardless of the exit used, read or paraphrase the following:

A terrible cry issues from the burning, storm-wracked manor. The tortured scream is unmistakably that of Lord Ramsay. Young Liza's eyes open wide, and you recoil unconsciously. In place

of pupils, the girl has only indescent green orbs! Her lips curl into a grimace not meant for any human face, and she snarls, "Father!"

The curse that has beset the Ramsay family ends when the entire family is consumed by fire. (Liza and Blake Ramsay are the only remaining family members who have so far escaped this fate.) Displaying her true strength, Liza attempts to fling aside anyone who stands in her way as she rushes into the flames to seek vengeance upon her father. Liza does not allow PCs to keep her from reaching her family and breaking the curse, attacking anyone who stands in her way.



The most likely conclusion for this adventure is detailed below under Event 9. PC actions could result in different endings for this adventure. The DM is encouraged to improvise and tailor the conclusion as circumstances dictate.

### Event 9: The Clock Strikes Twelve

This event assumes that the PCs have rescued Liza from Lord Ramsay's laboratory and set into motion the fateful Nightstorm (as described in Event 8). It also assumes that Liza has fled into the burning house to confront her father. Read or paraphrase the following text at this time:

You stand a good distance from Lord Ramsay's home, the driving rain stinging your flesh. A halo of flame rises above the blackened edifice, drawing your eyes to the roiling clouds churning in the sky overhead. When you peer into the embrous wreckage of the old house, you see the doctor himself stagger into view through the smoke-filled doorway.

Three barely substantial forms flit about him as young Liza appears from behind to drag her father to the ground. Even from here you can see a perverse smile below her wide, glowing green eyes. From deep within the

house come the twelve chimes of a grandfather clock. Again and again the chimes sound, bringing midnight to the island at long last. Suddenly, a gout of flame from within the collapsing house immolates the doctor. His ashes vanish behind curtains of driving rain.

A piercing squawk penetrates the tolling clock and thunderous cauldron of the storm-wrought sky. Descending from the bleak clouds is a giant griffon. It alights gracefully on the rain-soaked grass and glares at you before lowering its wings in an apparent offer to take you to safety!

The topiary griffon that once stood in the hedgerow (area 6) has transformed into a living griffon. The griffon is large enough to carry the entire party, growing from its original size if need be. Any PC who climbs onto its back is carried to the city of Mordentshire. Once its passengers are safely delivered, the magnificent creature flies off, vanishing on the horizon as the sun rises.

If for some reason the PCs do not accept the griffon's offer, they must outlast the storm and await a boat. With the curse lifted, a ship should pass by the island within the month.

**Griffon:** AC 3; MV 12, fly 30 (C, D if mounted); HD 7; hp 55; THAC0 13; #AT

3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; SZ L; ML 12; INT semi (4); AL N; XP 650; MM/178.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

Once the PCs leave the isle, they find the Lands of the Mists awaiting their return. Surely events have been taking place in their absence. If no adventure immediately awaits them, perhaps they remember rumors they overheard concerning Markovia and Dominia. Of course, their ordeal in the home of Lord Ramsay may have left them with little desire to enter such a situation again. PCs who leave the isle by means other than the griffon "topiary" need to make some sort of deal with the captain of whatever ship happens upon them. A note to remember when planning this encounter: Most good-natured sea captains do not spend their time trolling the Sea of Sorrows!

PCs who escape the isle after breaking the Ramsays' curse deserve an experience award for their accomplishment. A generous DM could divide the 9,800 XP value of the ghosts and golem among surviving PCs, though a smaller amount may be desired to preserve campaign balance. Each character in the party should earn no less than 1,000 XP for breaking the curse on the isle and surviving to tell the tale. Ω



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by Aaron Williams



CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (mostly indoors)
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any (mostly night)
DIET:	Nil
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	9
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	6
THACO:	13
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4/1-4/1-2
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison, suffocation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (6' tall)
MORALE:	Elite (13-14)
XP VALUE:	1,400

When lying in bed at night, wondering what those strange creeks and pops are in the darkness, who hasn't felt just a little more secure by drawing up the covers? Even the security of bedclothes is taken from us by death linens.

Death linens are beings of living cloth, usually sheets, pillows, and other items associated with beds. They have been infected with latent psychic forces born of nightmares. They are normally active at night, but they can lurk in cupboards or laundries and assault people at any time. They come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

The sheet variety of the death linen takes on a disturbingly humanoid form when it strikes, moving at a surprisingly swift pace, and it gyrates and flops as it moves, a most disturbing spectacle. Anyone seeing a sheet must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation or flee in terror for 2-8 rounds. (In the RAVENLOFT campaign setting, use a fear check instead.) Sheets normally reside indoors, but they think nothing of chasing prey across the countryside.

**Combat:** The sheet strikes twice in combat with its ragged fists for 1-4 points of damage each. It can suffocate if it hits with an 18 or better. A successful Strength check is needed to free oneself from the sheet. It can also bite for 1-2 points of damage, and its fangs are poisonous (Type C; onset time 2-5 minutes; Dmg 25/2-8).

Blunt weapons inflict only 1 point of damage (plus any magical weapon and Strength bonuses) to a sheet per successful hit. Death linens are not undead and cannot be turned by priests or harmed by holy water.

Fire causes double damage to them. A gallon or more of water sloshed on a sheet affects it as the *slow* spell. If a character strikes it with a roll of 19 or 20, the creature is stunned for one round, and it flops to the floor in an inert pile. Any attacks



*"What he chiefly remembers about it is a horrible, an intensely horrible, face of crumpled linen. With formidable quickness it moved into the middle of the room, and, as it groped and waved, one corner of its draperies swept across Parkins's face."*

*—"Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad," M. R. James*

made in the following round automatically hit.

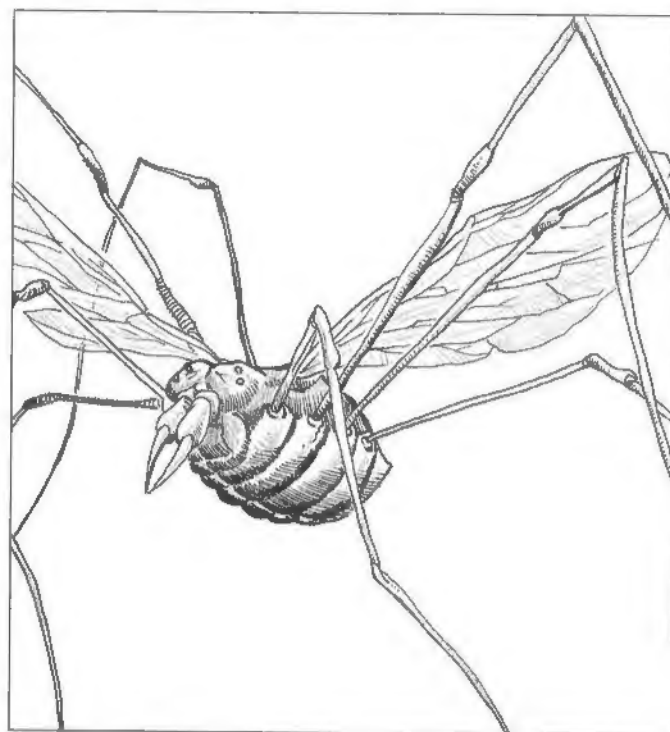
Even after it is reduced to 0 hit points, a sheet's life force might enter another sheet in the next 1-12 months—a noncumulative 10% chance per month. After all, we all sleep, and we often have nightmares, which strengthen the strange beings. If a slain death linen does not reappear within one year, the life-force forever dissipates.

**Habitat/Society:** Sheets are apt to roam the countryside for prey, but they find greater comfort in houses, castles, and manors. They need no nourishment; they assault or avoid living creatures for reasons known only to themselves. They rarely tolerate the presence of others of their kind.

**Ecology:** Like other varieties of death linen, the sheet holds no place in the natural order. Certain magical items have been created to control such beings, especially whistles inscribed with magical runes. Bits of them can be used in rites to create zombies and other undead beings.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Swarm
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Blood
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (2-4)
TREASURE:	J, K, L
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil

NO. APPEARING:	1-6
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12, Fly 12 (B)
HIT DICE:	2
THACO:	19
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Blood drain, insect swarm
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Shrinking
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	M (5-6' long)
MORALE:	Steady (11-12)
XP VALUE:	175



These creatures were let into the world accidentally by foolish practitioners of black magic. They resemble reddish-brown daddy longlegs with wings, and they can stand upright on their spindly limbs (giving them a height of 5 or 6 feet).

**Combat:** A sawfly bites for 1-4 points of damage, and on the following round it causes 1-4 points of damage automatically due to blood drainage. Afterward it attempts to bite again. Once per day a sawfly can summon a swarm of gnats and flies to assault its enemies (the equivalent of a *summon swarm* spell).

A sawfly can shrink at will to the size of an ordinary insect. If a sawfly loses more than 50% of its hit points, it shrinks automatically. If any normal gnats or flies are in the area, it mingles with them and becomes nearly impossible to spot. Searchers can detect them by making a successful Intelligence check on 1d100. In its diminutive state, the sawfly can dodge any attack if it makes a successful saving throw vs. wands. However, any successful hit crushes it. It cannot attack in small form.

**Habitat/Society:** Demonic sawflies instinctively desire to swarm with others of their kind, but such swarms are rare on the Prime Material Plane. Unlike most insects, the females lay merely one or two eggs per year, so only a handful of sawflies are found in any one area. To make up for this low population density, sawflies join normal swarms of gnats and flies and follow them on their rounds. They need blood to survive, however, so they will abandon their adopted swarms to feed.

Sawflies live longer than most insects, up to fifty years. They go into hibernation in times of need, and they can survive in this condition for as long as one century. The passage of any warm-blooded creature within 20 feet of a hibernating sawfly awakens it, and the insect attacks ravenously.

Since demonic sawflies lay eggs infrequently, they guard

*"... there was—I don't know how to put it—a sensation of long thin arms, or legs, or feelers, all about my face, and neck, and body ... I tore at the curtain and somehow let in enough light to be able to see something waving which I knew was an insect's leg, by the shape of it; but, Lord, what a size! Why, the beast must have been as tall as I am."*

*—"The Residence at Whitminster,"  
M. R. James*

their broods jealously. Sawfly eggs can be found hidden in out-of-the-way nooks and crannies of buildings, castles, and other relatively dry shelters. A sawfly defending its eggs gains a +2 bonus on all attacks and saving throws.

**Ecology:** Demonic sawflies might have been parasites on the monstrous inhabitants of another plane, as mosquitoes and fleas are parasites on the Prime Material Plane. Due to their shrinking ability, sawflies infiltrate castles and houses as easily as ordinary insects. They are smart enough to realize that some cunning is needed to attack humans and other intelligent creatures. They often hide in cupboards, closets, or cabinets, ready to spring out on unsuspecting victims. Such hiding places might contain a small amount of treasure.

The blood and eggs of a demonic sawfly can be used in *enlarge* or *reduce* spells or potions. Its wings, ground up, can be used as components of spells such as *summon swarm*.

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Darkness, night
DIET:	Hair, fur
INTELLIGENCE:	Average (8-10)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil

NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	7
MOVEMENT:	12
HIT DICE:	5
THAC0:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Strangulation
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	See below
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	50%
SIZE:	M (5-6' tall)
MORALE:	Champion (15-16)
XP VALUE:	975

A person who is extremely vain concerning the appearance of his hair can create a living hair creature. Such a person must use strands of his own hair as material in the creation of a curtain or rug, and the rug must contain certain magic sigils as part of the design.

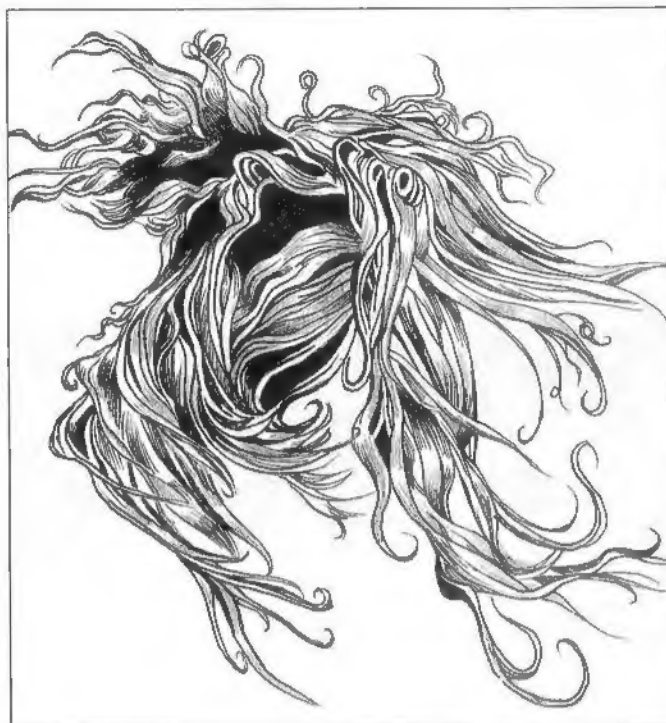
Sages suggest that the old folk tales about corpses growing hair after death, sometimes enough to fill the coffin, are actually accounts of living hair forming spontaneously. Once having grown in the womb of the grave, living hair can trickle out through the merest cracks and reach the surface world.

**Combat:** Living hair appears as a humanoid mass of matted hair. It can break up into individual fibers and pass through cracks and under doors, but it requires 2-8 rounds to reform its manlike shape, so it tries to hide in a dark corner or nook until ready to strike. It can Move Silently (90%), Hide in Shadows (80%), Detect Noises (50%), and Climb Walls (95%).

In battle, living hair strikes with its two shapeless fists. If discovered before it has fully formed, it can fight but causes only 1 point of damage per blow on the first round, 1-2 points on the second, 1-3 on the third, and 1-4 on the fourth before finally reaching its full strength of 1-6 points of damage per blow.

If living hair strikes with an attack roll of 18 or higher, it begins strangling the victim for an automatic 2-8 points of damage per round. This is not simply a matter of seizing the victim by the neck—wads of hair actually enter the nostrils and windpipe! The victim—or other characters—must make a successful Strength check on 1d20 to yank the monster loose, foregoing any other attacks that round.

Living hair regenerates 2 points of damage per round. Blunt weapons cause only half damage, but fire-based attacks inflict double damage to the creature. Even if killed, living hair



*"It was in the attitude of one that had crept along the floor on its belly, and it was, so far as could be recollected, a human figure. But of the face which was now rising to within a few inches of his own no feature was discernible, only hair."*

*—"The Diary of Mr. Poynter,"  
M. R. James*

grows back in 2-20 days unless every strand of hair is destroyed. Living hair is not considered undead and cannot be turned by priests or harmed with holy water.

**Habitat/Society:** These monsters are loners, mostly due to their rarity but also because they carry a residue of vanity from the humans or demihumans who gave them birth. This vanity has soured into a general hatred of all humanoid races, and they actively try to destroy characters with higher than average Charisma. They inhabit artificial structures like castles, manors, and dungeons—another memory of their "parents."

**Ecology:** Although not natural beings, living hair creatures have stepped into an almost untapped ecological niche: They can utilize cast-off hair and fur in their bodies, materials that most creatures find difficult to digest.

Bits of living hair are used by wizards in the creation of magical ropes, such as those of *climbing* and *constriction*, and *nets of entanglement*.